

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PRS-01 SS-15 SSO-00 CCO-00 /019 R

DRAFTED BY PA:SACORNWELL:SAC
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O 292139Z DEC 76 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 312815 TOSEC 340108

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 29, HEADED "NAMIBIA'S INDEPENDENCE."

2. THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SNEAKED IN
ANOTHER POLITICAL ATROCITY THE OTHER DAY. THOUGH NEGO-
TIATIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE ARE UNDER WAY IN NAMIBIA, THE
AFRICAN NAME OF THE LAND SOUTH AFRICA RULES AS THE
COLONY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA, THE ASSEMBLY SHOUTED THROUGH
A RESOLUTION ENDORSING "ARMED STRUGGLE" TO END PRETORIA'S
CONTROL. IT IS TRUE THAT THE RESOLUTION, APPROVED BY THE
KIND OF MARGIN (107-6) THAT HAS COME TO SIGNAL ASSEMBLY
HYSTERIA, ADDS NO GUNS TO THE GUERRILLAS ON THE GROUND.
THE IDEA BEHIND IT, HOWEVER, IS APPALLING: THE UNITED
NATIONS IS OSTENSIBLY DEVOTED TO THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION
OF INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES. OTHERS, NOT THE UNITED
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NATIONS, ARE IN FACT TRYING TO RESOLVE THIS DISPUTE PEACE-
FULLY. YET HERE COMES THE ASSEMBLY TO ENDORSE A SOLUTION
BY VIOLENCE. THE VOTE TRAMPLES ON THE U.N. CHARTER AND
ON GOOD SENSE ALIKE. ANYONE WISHING TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS FALLEN INTO SUCH LOW REPUTE CAN END
HIS INQUIRY HERE.

3. BEHIND THE VOTE, OF COURSE, LIES A SHABBY POLITICAL EXERCISE. SOME TIME AGO, THE NAMIBIAN GROUP CALLED THE SOUTH WEST AFRICAN PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION (SWAPO) GOT THE ASSEMBLY TO ANOINT IT THE "SOLE" REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE. SWAPO IS THE OVAMBO TRIBAL FACTION THAT IS PROBABLY THE BEST ORGANIZED POLITICAL/MILITARY OPERATION IN THE COUNTRY. BUT ITS CLAIM TO SPEAK FOR ALL NAMIBIANS IS ABSURD--AT LEAST IN THE EYES OF A PLAIN MAJORITY OF NAMIBIANS, THOSE WHOSE LEADERS ARE ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS NOW. BY SKILLFUL DIPLOMACY AND BY BRANDISHING ITS MARXIST CREDENTIALS, HOWEVER, SWAPO WON THE ASSEMBLY'S UNCRITICAL SANCTION ALL THE SAME.

4. THIS IS THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE NEW ASSEMBLY ENDORSEMENT OF "ARMED STRUGGLE" SHOULD BE VIEWED--AS ANOTHER DIPLOMATIC VICTORY FOR SWAPO. ITS GREAT FEAR, YOU SEE, IS THAT OTHER BLACKS IN NAMIBIA WILL NEGOTIATE THE SORT OF INDEPENDENCE THAT LEAVES TO SWAPO, AT BEST, ONLY THAT SHARE OF POWER THAT IT COULD HOPE TO COMMAND BY ITS OWN POLITICAL RESOURCES. SWAPO WOULD PREFER TO USE THE LEVERAGE OF ITS GUERRILLA ACTIVITY AND ITS DIPLOMATIC STRENGTH TO WIN TOTAL POWER. THE U.N. IS ITS PATSY.

5. SWAPO'S GREATEST ALLY, HOWEVER, IS NOT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. IT IS SOUTH AFRICA. IT IS MAINLY SOUTH AFRICAN RIGIDITY THAT HAS STALEMATED THE NEGOTIATIONS ON NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE, DISCOURAGED THE MODERATE BLACK TRIBES AND MIXED-RACE COMMUNITIES PARTICIPATING IN THOSE NEGOTIATIONS, AND GIVEN SWAPO THE OPENING THAT ITS GUERRILLAS AND DIPLO-

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MATS ARE TRYING TO WIDEN NOW. MANY AFRICANS EXPECT JIMMY CARTER SOMEHOW TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS WHEN HE TAKES OFFICE IN JANUARY. FAR MORE IMPORTANT IS WHETHER PRETORIA CHANGES ITS STRATEGY AND TAKES AN APPROACH THAT WILL PERMIT THE PROMPT ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT IN NAMIBIA, THE IMMEDIATE ENDING OF APARTHEID THERE, AND AN ORDERLY TRANSITION TO FULL INDEPENDENCE--AS PROMISED BY SOUTH AFRICA. BY THAT PROCESS, SWAPO WOULD HAVE AN INCENTIVE TO JOIN WITH ITS FELLOW NAMIBIANS IN THE BUILDING OF THE LAND THEY SHARE. (END TEXT)
ROBINSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, PRESS COMMENTS, NAMIBIA, INDEPENDENCE, VOTING, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, TOSEC, NONAGGRESSION, RESOLUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE312815
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SACORNWELL:SAC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760475-0642
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976126/aaaaaerh.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2004 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <05 JAN 2005 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL
TAGS: SOPN, OVIP, UN, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006